

Milestones In Federal Environmental Process

Presented to: Airports Conference

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Federal Aviation
Administration



Presentation Outline

- Planning & National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Categorical Exclusions (CATEX)
- Environmental Assessments (EAs) & Environmental Impact Statement (EISs)



Planning & NEPA

By: Cayla Morgan & Stan Allison



Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regs & NEPA Statute

- Integrate planning and NEPA at the earliest possible time
- Planning decisions should reflect environmental values

Proper Integration = ?

- Project processing will be more efficient
- Timeframes will be minimized
- Issues and impacts will be thoroughly addressed
- Pitfalls will be avoided

Avoiding Pitfalls – Is project ready for NEPA analysis

- Is it on the ALP?
- Are the justification requirements met?
- Are the eligibility requirements met?
- Is the Purpose and Need still valid?
- Is the funding likely?

Project Coordination is Critical

- Sponsor
- Consultant
- ADO Planner
- ADO Environmental Specialist
- ADO Project Manager



Key Items to keep in mind

Purpose & Need

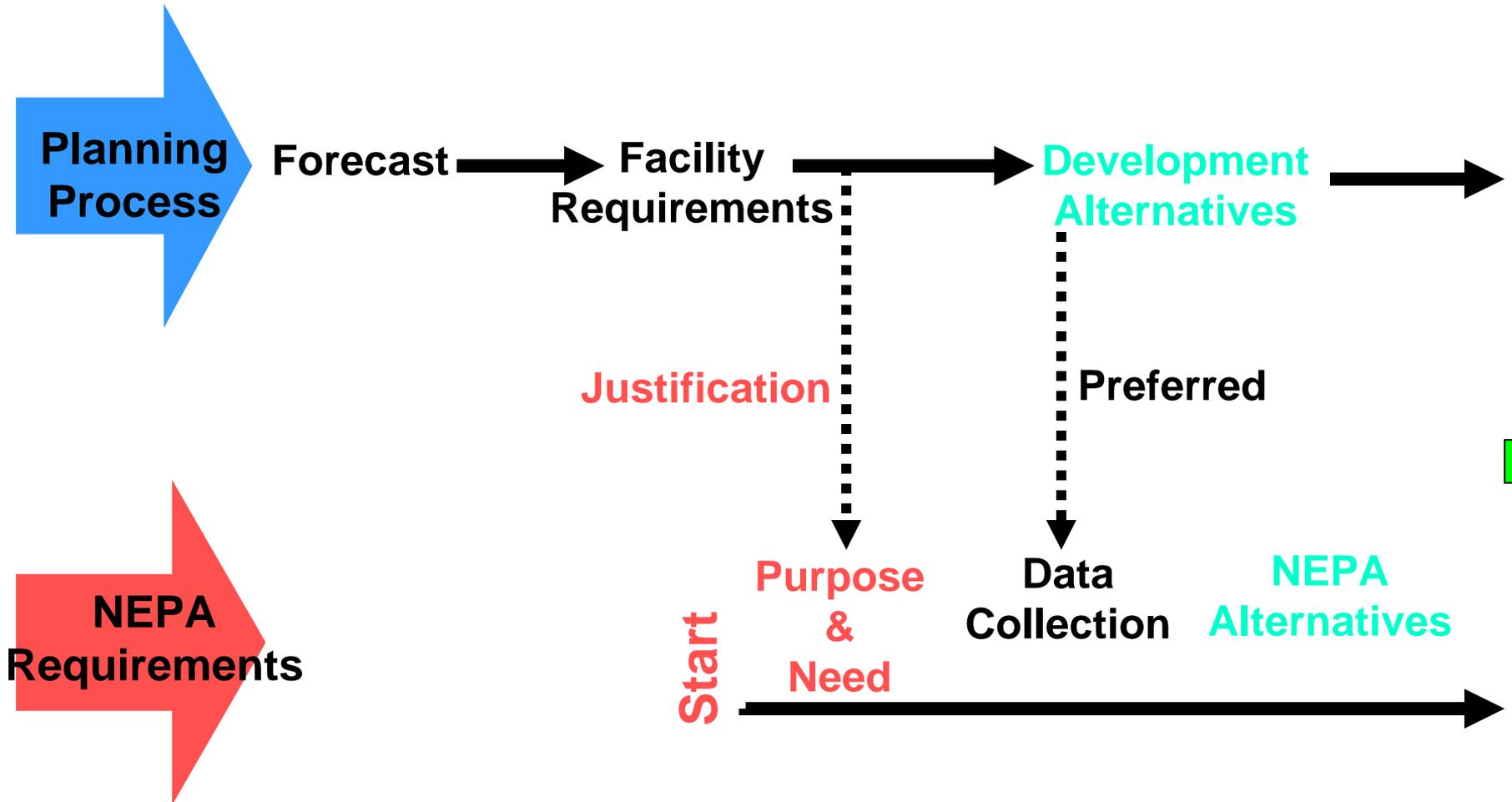
- Clearly defined aviation problem
- Substantiated and defensible

Alternatives Analysis

- Reasonable range of proposed solutions to the problem
- Thorough rationale for retention and elimination

How Planning & NEPA Relate

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Justification - The Magic

- 500 Annual Itinerant Operations
 - and when are you going to hit that?
- How are these ops currently being constrained?
 - i.e., What penalty are your operators paying now?



What is required from you...

- A **strong** purpose and need;
- A **clear** justification;
- **Reasonable alternatives considered**;
- In order to move into the environmental phase!



Categorical Exclusions (CATEXs)

By: Hans Anker, P.E.



Categorical Exclusions

What is a “CATEX”?

- A **listed Federal action** that **MAY** not have an environmental impact.
 - Based on past experience
 - No significant effect on the human environment
 - Does not normally require an EA or EIS
- Listed CATEXs are not automatically exempted from further environmental review under NEPA.
 - Extraordinary Circumstances

Categorical Exclusions

CATEX Memo / Letter:

- Listed CATEXs as indicated in 1050.1E Paragraph, 303
- Low risk and **no extraordinary circumstances**
- Usually internal to the Airports District Office (ADO)
 - Planning studies
 - SRE / ARFF purchases
 - Replace existing _____.
 - No new ground disturbed
 - No expansion

Categorical Exclusions

Categorical Exclusion Form:

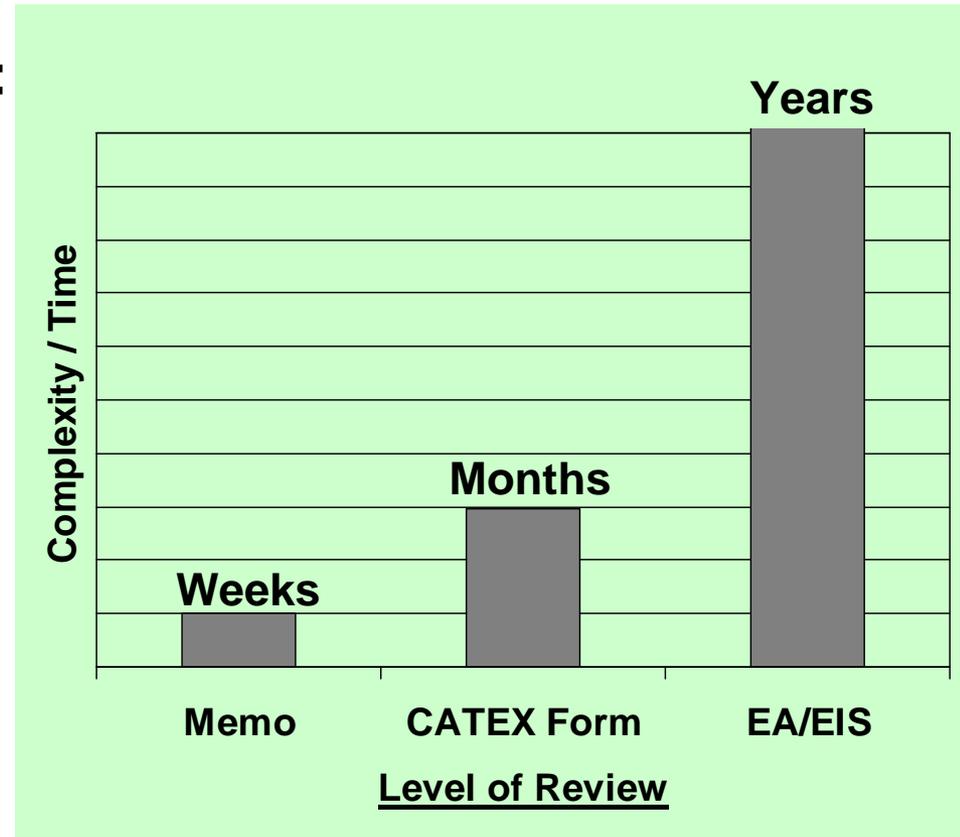
- Required for most projects
- NOT a CHECKLIST!
- Supporting documentation / justification
 - Agency coordination letters (FWS, COE, etc.)
 - Wetlands
 - General Conformity Analysis
 - Drawings / Maps of project areas



Categorical Exclusions

Levels of Environmental Review:

- CATEX Memo / Letter
- Categorical Exclusion Form
- EA
 - Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
 - EIS



Environmental Assessments (EAs) & Environmental Impact Statements (EISs)

By: TJ Stetz



NEPA documents are decision-making, disclosure documents.

Federal documents, not the sponsors.

Tells a story / paints a picture.



Public involvement = open process

- Inclusive not exclusive
- Involve public early in process
- Fully address comments



Early coordination with FAA and agencies



- Set schedule, deadlines, and milestones
- Use scope of work as roadmap
- Allow adequate time for review
- Be realistic!
- Coordinate regularly



Readability

- Consistent message and facts
- Project consistent throughout
- Clear and logical
- Define acronyms, terminology, and concepts.

Coordinate draft chapters EA / EIS early with FAA, **especially:**

- Purpose & Need
- alternatives analysis
- environmental consequences
- technical appendices

Purpose & Need

be able to substantiate it

Need- A condition that needs to be changed.
What's the problem?

Purpose- An objective; goal to be met by
satisfying the need.
Why resolve the problem?

Alternatives- Options to resolve the problem (need) to achieve the objective (purpose).

Good alternatives evaluation is essential, the heart of NEPA.



Purpose & Need are similar

Don't mix alternatives in with Purpose & Need



Example - Deficient Runway Safety Area (RSA)

- **Need-** To meet FAA standards for RSA
- **Purpose-** Provide safety for short landings & aircraft overruns
- **Alternatives-**
 - Extend RSA
 - Relocate road
 - Shift runway
 - Displace or relocate threshold

Document Elements

- Existing / affected environment
 - what's there?
- Consequences,
 - how it's effected?
- Consistent format
- Background / project history



Document Logic

- Provide rationale to support conclusion
- Provide documentation
- Take the “hard look” at the impacts in making our decision
- Document commensurate with the impact

Permitting processes → local, state, and Federal



Coordination Topics

Endangered
Species Act (ESA)
Coordination

Wetlands

Cultural Resources

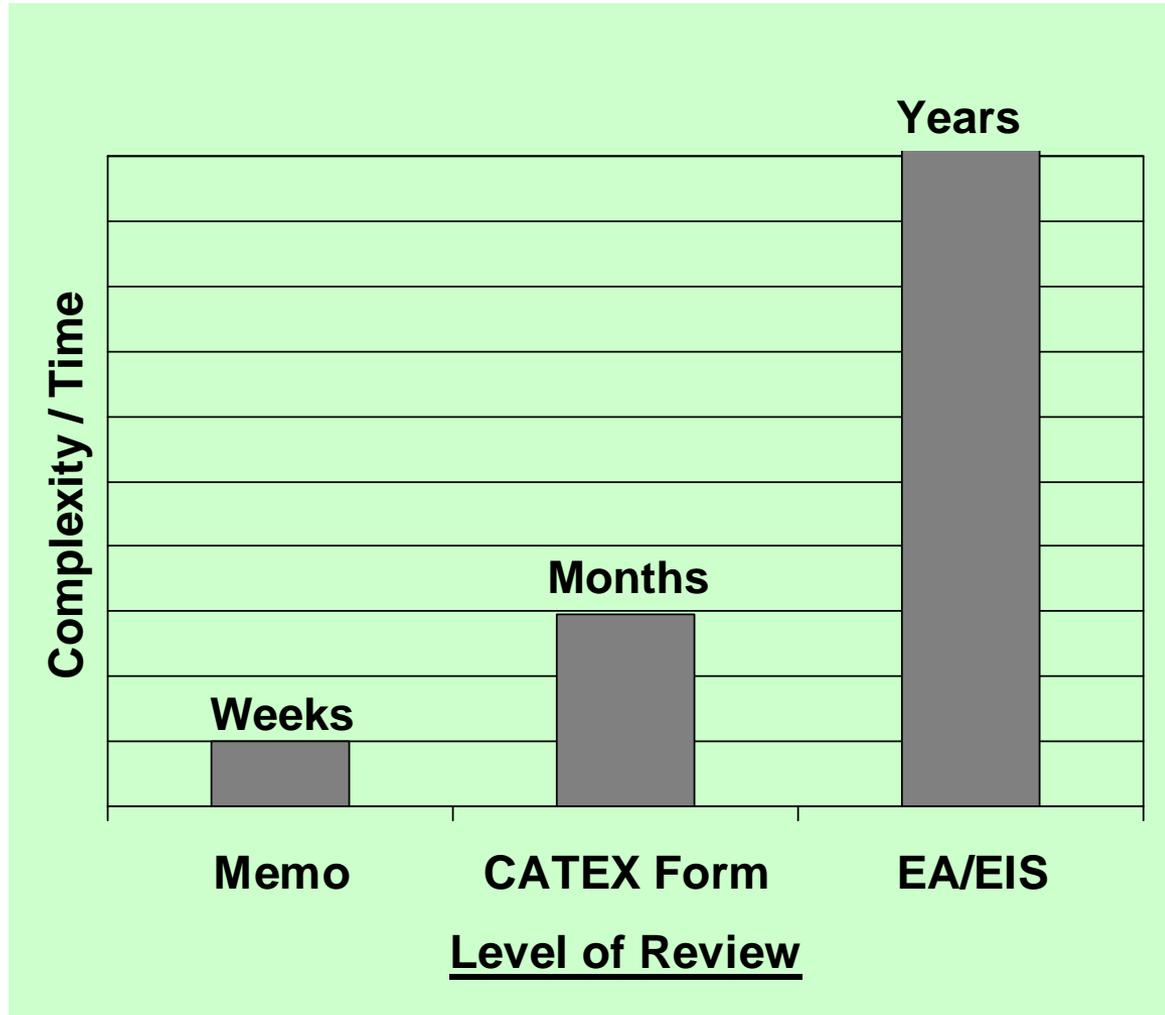
Mitigation

NEPA Completion is Signed FAA Documentation

- **CATEX**
- **FONSI**
- **Record of Decision (ROD) / Administrative Record**

Environmental Timelines

**Early
Project
Coordination
is Critical!**



Environmental Milestones in AIP

- 4+ Years prior to construction
 - Determine level of environmental review
 - EIS may need to begin much earlier
- 3 Years prior to construction
 - Inventory affected environment
 - Acquiring land may need to begin much earlier
- 2 Years prior to construction
 - Coordinate EA/CATEX documentation for FAA review and funding

Environmental Milestones in AIP

- 1 Year prior to construction
 - Complete environmental documentation
 - Secure other environmental approvals/permits
- Year of construction
 - Complete FAA Env. Findings by Jan 15th
 - ROD, FONSI, or CATEX
 - Monitor environmental mitigation requirements
- After construction completion
 - Monitor environmental mitigation requirements

Take Home Message...

- Documents must be – clear, concise, supported, defensible, and fully coordinated
- Integrate planning and NEPA at the earliest possible time
- Planning decisions should reflect environmental values





Questions?



Federal Aviation
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